Figure 6. The Muleshoe Dump consists of several different covers. The WNW aspect indicated in the left portion of the upper photo has a good coversoil (shown in Figure 7) giving way to a thinner, rocky coversoil/sheep fescue community toward the spur ridge (Figure 8). The lower photo shows the effect of the aspect shift to the southwest.

Figure 7. A good-looking 29"-thick coversoil is associated with the luxuriant vegetation in Figure ~~5~~ 6. The coversoil has a moderate amount of coarse fragments and also contains some wood pieces. More plant-available P would benefit plants.

Figure 8. In contrast, this 17"-thick, rocky coversoil -- combined with a warmer aspect -- typifies another portion of Muleshoe Dump revegetation. Warm-aspect, upland revegetation is always the most difficult to revegetate satisfactorily. A high rock content is unnecessary on gentle slopes. This site is supporting about all the photosynthesis it can. The "?" refers to the questionable designation as soil.

Figure 9. Another manifestation of aspect + coversoil can be found at the Horseshoe Dump. The north face, shown here, looks pretty good although dozer basins were not properly placed to assure that overflow from one basin would flow into the next downhill basin. It's a quality coversoil 17" thick with minimal coarse fragments and lower bulk density than other sites. (Bulk density wasn't quantified, but digging soils pits gives you a pretty good index.)

Figure 10. The south-facing aspect of Horseshoe Dump reclamation is a lot more like primary succession than is the north face. The rocky coversoil is about 15" thick. The slope is pretty well armored with rock but won't support a lot of grasses, but it's a decent site for woody plants.

Figure 11. This wedge of 1990 revegetation between upper and lower roads is generally well vegetated, with some localized erosion (not shown). The difference is shallower coversoil (10" vs. 15") and more coarse fragments, including large cobbles, in the eroded area. Rocky coversoil control erosion, but to the extent that they limit plant abundance, they assure some erosion.

Figure 12. This site and vegetation is similar to that in Figure 11, except that it is irrigated. The effect on primary productivity is obvious. Mountain brome, considered by the USDA to be a native variety of smooth brome originating in Pullman, WA, is a bunchgrass. Most varieties of smooth brome are rhizomatous.